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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
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RUEHKE/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 1896
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1091
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 005017

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DEPT FOR AF/C M. ASHRAF, AF/S M. TABLER-STONE
PARIS FOR G. D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [CT](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA TO PROVIDE MILITARY TRAINING IN CAR

REF: A. IIR 6-880-0037-07

[1](#)B. TRENKLE-PANOS EMAIL OF 12/11/2006

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Catherine Kay. Reasons 1.4(b)
) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: South Africa plans to provide military training and technical assistance to the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR). Minister of Defense Lekota traveled to Bangui December 8 to discuss the possible military training program. A SANDF military team departed for CAR December 13 to assess training needs and timing. We believe South Africa views the proposed assistance as a way to promote stability in central Africa, as well as advance their commercial mining interests in CAR. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Deputy Director Carol Rath (protect) told PolOff December 12 that Minister of Defense Mosiuoa Lekota traveled to Bangui December 8 to meet with CAR President Francois Bozize and military officials. Rath said that Bozize had requested South African military support, and that South Africa agreed to provide military training and technical assistance. A small military team, led by RADM Philip Schoultz, traveled to Bangui December 13 to assess training options and timing (Ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) Rath said that South Africa's assistance is a tangible way to express support for an elected government that has made "progress." According to the Sunday Independent newspaper, Lekota said that South Africa was seeking to "bring stability" to CAR and its neighboring countries (Ref B). Rath emphasized that Pretoria is providing the assistance in the context of its bilateral Cooperation Agreement with CAR, which was signed in April 2006 during President Bozize's working visit to Pretoria. She also said that South Africa is responding to the African Union's request to members to support the elected CAR government.

[1](#)4. (C) In addition to the proposed military training, South Africa recently donated USD 250,000 to the CAR Government to "clear international arrears," according to Rath (NFI). The African Development Bank is coordinating the effort to relieve CAR's debt burden.

[1](#)5. (SBU) South Africa's commercial interests in the CAR

include a uranium mine, owned by the firm UraMin Inc., which opened in October. The diamond giant DeBeers holds concessions in the CAR, but these sites are not active because of the tense security situation. South Africa does not have an embassy in Bangui, but rather covers the country from Yaounde.

¶16. (C) Independent Newspaper editor Hans Pienaar, who traveled with Lekota to Bangui, told PolOff December 13 that the South African mission asked detailed questions about military barracks, the number of female recruits, uniforms, and equipment, suggesting that they planned a robust military training program. Pienaar said that Lekota stressed that South Africa would not provide lethal military equipment or supplies, but did not exclude the possibility of commercial sales of such equipment. Pienaar believes that South Africa is motivated by a desire to stabilize CAR, protect Africa's image, and advance their commercial interests. He noted that the rebels control parts of the diamond mining area.

¶17. (C) Institute for Security Studies analyst Henri Boshoff told PolOff December 13 that the French were not happy with the South African initiative -- since they regard CAR as their area of influence -- but both Pretoria and Paris are now making efforts to coordinate.

¶18. (C) COMMENT: We agree that the South African Government views the proposed military training program in CAR, as well as its cash donation, as ways to help stabilize the fragile central African country. Stability in this region is important to South Africa's interests. Pretoria devoted enormous resources to conflict resolution in DRC and Sudan, and the last thing Pretoria wants is another conflict or coup in the region. South Africa's mining interests, while not

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the dominant factor, no doubt played a role in the SAG decision to become involved in CAR. END COMMENT.
BOST